

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: □ Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4305, the Child and Elderly Missing Alert Program. This important measure will assist law enforcement agencies to address the terrifying experience of when a child, elderly person, or other family member or friend goes missing.

The number of individuals that go missing each year is staggering. For example, a child goes missing almost every 40 seconds in the United States. That's about 800,000 children reported missing every year.

The adults suffering from Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia also become missing persons. These diseases cause many of their suffers to become disoriented and lost; and because of their condition, these individuals are often unable to assist first responders in finding their way back to their caregivers. It is currently estimated that about 5 1/2 million Americans suffer from Alzheimer's disease. In about 2050, that number may go up to 16 million.

Locating a missing individual must be done quickly. Research has shown that time is of the essence with missing persons. The first hours of disappearance are the most vital. According to a study by the attorney general of Washington State and the U.S. Department of Justice, 74 percent of children abducted and murdered were killed within the first 3 hours. Half of the elderly adults who wander from their homes suffer serious injury or death if not found within 24 hours. Accordingly, alerts to law enforcement in those crucial first few hours after a person goes missing is obviously very critical.

H.R. 4305 facilitates targeting telephone and cellular alerts to residents and businesses in the area where the person was last seen. The residents and businesses are able to opt out if they choose to, but most of the people obviously want this information.

H.R. 4305 will help provide meaningful aid to law enforcement in recovering missing children, elderly people, and the disabled. I urge my colleagues to support the legislation.